

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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October 3, 2005

Mr. Sam Hamilton, Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1875 Century Boulevard
Atlanta, GA 30345

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to address Florida panther conservation needs for over 25 years, including the development of the Guidelines for Living with Florida Panthers and the Interagency Florida Panther Response Plan. We would be pleased to act as a Cooperating Agency for the Environmental Assessment of the Response Plan by providing the assistance you have requested from Mr. Darrell Land, FWC's Panther Team Leader. Mr. Land can be reached at (239) 643-4220 or by e-mail: Darrell.Land@MyFWC.com.

The Response Plan and associated Guidelines are the products of many months of work by wildlife biologists, law enforcement personnel, administrators, and public information officers from the National Park Service, FWS, and FWC. The tremendous growth of Florida's human population and the shrinking interface between areas occupied by people and by wildlife present challenges for natural resources agencies. The Guidelines and Response Plan will be essential to foster and maintain continued public support for Florida panther conservation and recovery as we address these sociological, political and environmental challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Victor J. Heller".

For Kenneth D. Haddad
Executive Director

kdh/rkf